

Fort Western  
Augusta, Maine

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Maine

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Josiah T. Tubby, District Officer  
537 Congress Street, Portland, Maine

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"FORT WESTERN"

Augusta, Kennebec County, Maine

Owner

City of Augusta

Date of Erection

1754

Builders

The Kennebec Purchase (Plymouth Company). Gershom Flagg, one of the proprietors, was entrusted with the general oversight and planning of the buildings.

Present Condition

In 1921, the main building of the fort was restored to its original condition. The blockhouses at the fort were built at that time.

Number of Stories

Two and One Half

Materials of Construction

The frame of the large building is of squared timber about ten inches thick, dovetailed at the corners. The side walls and roof of the building are shingled. The dormer windows were built at the time the building was erected and mention is made in some of the old Kennebec Purchase bills, of the cost of building the dormer windows.

The foundation of the building is of stone. There are four chimneys with sixteen fireplaces, eight fireplaces on the first floor and eight on the second. The two chimneys toward the northerly end of the building are set on brick arches and are believed to be the original chimneys while the two at the opposite end of the building were probably built a short time after the fort ceased to be used as such. All brick of the chimneys is laid in clay, with fine sand mixed in it.

A trading room and store occupied space in the front section of the building.

It is understood that most of the work of restoring the building was that of removing plaster, paint and finish to uncover the original work.

Where the walls were plastered originally, investigation showed that the laths were nailed directly to the timber walls. Most of the original partitions, however, are of vertical pine sheathing. No information can be found to indicate that panelling and trim existed in the building at the time it was used as a fort.

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Other Existing Records

Booklet "Fort Western" by George Francis Dow, published by the Gannett Publishing Company, Augusta, Maine 1922.

Additional Data

The fort is located on the East side of the Kennebec River and the ridge of the roof of the main building runs parallel to the river. The officers' quarters were at the front of the building. The central front section of the building was given over to the store and trading room.

The fort was built for the purpose of defence against the French and Indians and also for housing of supplies for Fort Halifax. Cushnoc(now Augusta) is the head of navigation on the Kennebec River and supplies brought by boat to this point were reloaded and taken to Fort Halifax about twenty miles farther up the river.

During the time the fort was in use, no serious trouble was encountered with the French and Indians in that section but without doubt, Forts Western and Halifax were effective in keeping the French from penetrating the lower Kennebec region.

During Benedict Arnold's expedition to Quebec in 1775, the fort was used for a few days as barracks for the expedition.

Previous to the restoration of the building it had been used as a tenement house. Mr. Guy P. Gannett, believing the old building should be preserved for its historic interest, acquired the building and its land and restored the fort. He presented the fort to the city of Augusta.

Housed in the fort are a great many valuable and interesting relics of the colonial period.

*Charles E. Jarnell*

Approved:

*Frederic T. Tubby*

February 17, 1937

This is a copy of an original bill which is in the custody of the Maine Historical Society Library, Portland, Maine, in a box of papers of the Kennebec Purchase. Papers of the Proprietors of the Colony of New Plymouth. From Reuel Williams (folder 1751-1757). The bill covers work done at Fort Western at Cushnoot (Augusta) on the Kennebec River.

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Mr. Gershom Flagg

Dr.

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To Gershom Flagg Junr.

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For work done on the East River framing Blockhouses  
& for Cushnoot for the Plymouth Company and  
finishing Ditto & Agreement July 22, 1754

To two months & half Work framing the Blockhouses @ 53/4 &	6	13	4
To finishing two Large Blockhouses @ 12.8.0 &	24	16	0
To finishing two Large Plankers @ 1.5.4 &	2	10	8
To hewing 400 feet of Timber for Summers & Beams @ 10/8 &	2	2	8
To hewing 2444 feet of for said House at 10/8 &	13	0	8
To hewing 400 feet & Rafting the same @ 10/8 &	2	2	8
To framing of 183 squair of framing & Boarding ye Roof @ 7/4	67	2	0
To Shingling of 42 squair @ 4/8 & Squair	9	14	8
To Laying of 84 Squair of Ruff floors @ 3/ &	12	12	0
To Making all partitions plained and tongud	13	6	8
To Making 14 Inner Doors pannelled & Battind	3	5	4
To Making & hanging 3 Out Side doors		16	9
To Making 4 pairs of Plained Stairs & 1 pair Ruff ditto	3	4	0
To making the Out side Cellar Doors & Frame Compt		9	4
To making and hanging 16 Window Shutters @ 1/7	1	6	8
To making of Cabbins for 22 Men & a Guard Birth for 8 Men	1	8	0
To Hewing of Timber & framing & Planking up the ) vacant parts at Each End of the House & Joyning Each ) and Making a Gate in Ditto )	2	8	0
To making of Dressers & Shelves & Sink		13	4
To making 3 Dormond Windows & ye Roofs @ 6/ & each		18	0
To Capt. Thoo Cobb for himself & 4 hands 2 day in Gitting)	1	1	4
Sixteen Large Pillers to sett the Main House upon ) Carried Over	169	12	1
Brought from the Other Side	169	12	1
To framing & setting up the Great Gate Posts & Rails		12	0
To cash paide Wm. Hodgskins for 8 Day Labour in Bringing ) Up Plank & Joice in the Lighter )	1	1	4
To 2 days myself for Lime att Frankfort		6	8
To Cash paide Capt. Howard for 500 to; of Hay @ 2/ &		10	
To 5 Day to Arowisike After Hay		16	8
To Cash pay a man from Richmond & Ditto		6	
To Cash paide for half a Tun of Hay att Arrowsiok		18	8
To the Disbursments for Raising the Great House pd by G. Flagg			
To 75 lb of Pork att 1 & lb To half Hund. Bread att 21/L &		13	
To Two Bushells of potatoes @ 2/ & To gallon mollosses 2/2		6	2
To 17 1/2 gallons of Rum @ 2/8 & Galln	2	6	8
Ditto to 6 Day provisions for 5 hands whilst Picketting Viz:			
To 30 lb of Bread @ 1/8 & lb 30 lb of Pork @ 2/6 to 6 quart Beans		18	3 1/2
	179	7	6 1/2